

Mayor's Column for March 24, 2010 Review

Spring has arrived; magnolias are sporting their furry buds, and tulips and daffodils will soon be in bloom. It is also a time of much community activity. There is a lot of information to share.

On Saturday morning, March 13, a meeting of the Common Council's Committee of the Whole was held at the fire station. The agenda included discussion of general city budget components and intergovernmental revenue sources. There was a sobering update on state finances. City staff is to be commended; unaudited results for 2009 show that while revenues were down, aggressive management of expenses during the year resulted in revenues exceeding expenses. Johnson Block will be at City Hall this week to work on the 2009 annual audit.

Many city professional and service contracts conclude at the end of 2010, including city attorney, city engineer, city planner, and recycling. All union contracts end this December. Much effort to obtain new agreements will be undertaken in the coming months.

The Common Council is aware of the large, formidable task of "steering a safe course" through the current economic environment. It will be challenging.

The Common Council has an opening for city alderperson in District 2, roughly the southwest quadrant of our city. Letters of interest for this position can be submitted to Jodi Sam at City Hall. The time frame is for the Common Council to make an appointment at the April 13 Council meeting. The new alder can then be appointed to city committees at the Council reorganization meeting on April 20.

In the next few weeks preliminary work will occur on County Trunk C (West Main Street) from the library to Fourth Street and then North Fourth Street to the city limits. Manholes and some valves will be replaced prior to commencement of the DOT project later this spring.

The city yard will re-open for acceptance of brush and yard debris in the next few weeks. The yard is still too muddy for traffic. Check the city website at www.ci.evansville.wi.gov for an opening date or call City Hall at 882-2266 for an update.

The Wisconsin Office of Energy Independence has received \$5 million in funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to offer financial incentives to citizens to upgrade existing appliances and equipment to high-efficiency models to save energy use and energy costs. The State Energy-Efficient Appliance Rebate Program (SEEARP) is administered by Focus on Energy. The program eligibility requirements, set by the U.S. Department of Energy, include: installation in Wisconsin; must replace existing appliance/equipment; purchase on or after January 1, 2010; residential customers only (no businesses or landlords); and proof of recycling for certain appliance rewards.

Rewards of \$25 to \$100 are being offered on Energy Star qualified clothes washers, dishwashers, and refrigerators/freezers. Selected Energy Star hot water heating units are eligible for awards from \$50 to \$2,000 depending on the system. Rewards are also available on eligible Energy Star furnaces, boilers and central air conditioning systems.

SEEARP Rewards are offered in addition to existing Focus on Energy Cash-Back Awards and are available on a first come, first served basis while funds last. The SEEARP program is popular and funds are likely to be depleted by June 2010.

For a list of eligible models by appliance type, see your local retailer, call Focus on Energy at (800) 762-7077, or visit www.focusonenergy.com.

The Wisconsin Office of Energy Independence has indicated that formal announcement of successful Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant applications will occur in the next few days. The city applied for the block grant for a lighting upgrade at the Public Works Garage and retrofitting street lights with LED technology.

Our community keeps our thoughts and prayers with our young adults injured last weekend, and their worried families. The tragic circumstances of this accident have scarred our tightly-knit community and give us pause. It is so sad when risky choices have serious, life-altering consequences. Please give your support to our struggling friends/neighbors.

Discover Wisconsin Update

Planning continues for the Summer Kick-Off and Discover Wisconsin Premiere Party that will be held on Thursday evening, June 10, 2010, at Lake Leota. I am pleased to know that there will be a fireworks display as part of the family-friendly evening. Fireworks will whet our appetite for additional fireworks planned as part of our Fourth of July Celebration.

Community Announcements

I recently enjoyed attending an evening meeting of the fourth grade Girl Scout Troop 3358. They learned about operating a local business from Alderman Todd Culbertson of Rockn' Rollz. They learned about local history by a walking tour through downtown. While the majority of the scouts visited me at City Hall as third graders, they asked questions about the duties of mayor and I shared some of my memories of scouting as a youth in Evansville. Interacting with our youth is one of my favorite activities.

The 2010 Census form arrived at our home last week. We have completed and returned the questionnaire. Census population counts are used to determine state and local funding allocations for many programs. Please take ten minutes to fill out the questionnaire and return it. It is in the best interest of Evansville to do so.

The UW-Madison Small Business Development Center is offering a course, "Small Business Fundamentals", on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 6:30-9:00 p.m. from April 13-May 6, 2010. The course is designed for people who are planning to start or have recently started a business. The total course fee for the eight classes is \$250 and classes are held at Grainger Hall, 975 University Avenue, on the UW-Madison campus. Course topics include: Small business and the owner/manager; Marketing: developing your overall strategy; Promoting your product or service; Record keeping and accounting; Legal issues and requirements; Finance your business; Financial management and taxes; Using the Web for your business; Insurance and risk management; and The real story: testimony from a small business owner.

The course is offered four times a year. The next session will be July 20-August 12, 2010. If you must miss one evening, you may make it up anytime at another session within the next year for no additional cost. For more information, contact the UW-Madison Small Business Development Center at (608) 263-7680 or visit the website at www.uwsbdc.org.

Fairies, elves, pixies, and sprites return to celebrate spring at the Evansville Performing Arts Center this weekend. On Saturday, March 27, at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, March 28, at 2:00 p.m., "Faire Tales of Three" is sure to make you smile.

Community Thanks

Evansville is proud of our second graders for gathering dimes for Haiti. Thank you for generously collecting \$851.40 to purchase Kids Against Hunger meals that will feed over 34,000 Haitians. Great job!

Evansville citizens will have the opportunity to assemble Kids Against Hunger meals at the April Energy Fair. Stay tuned.

Evansville's support for Laurie Gomoll-Koch in the past few weeks has been remarkable. I am proud of our community's efforts to encourage our families struggling with illness and other challenges. Thank you for caring.

Our community thanks Tom Cothard for his fifteen years of service as city alderman. Over the years, Tom served on many committees and participated as chair of the water and light, public safety, and finance and labor relations committees. He also served as President of the Common Council. Tom's years of service translate into attendance at well over 500 meetings.

Recently, Tom and I met with our state legislators in their Capitol offices. Tom spoke against proposed legislation that would negatively impact our water and light utility and utility customers, even though the legislation would be beneficial for him personally. I respected him for that: he was representing the best interests of the majority of his constituents. Tom, we appreciate your years of dedicated service to Evansville.

